



FREIGHT

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More than just a **union**

\$44 billion US investment proves value of Rail Freight

THE man described as the world's greatest investor Warren Buffett has forked out \$44 billion (£26bn) for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, (BNSF) an American freight railroad company demonstrating his belief that the industry is extremely profitable. BNSF is America's second biggest railroad after Union Pacific.

America's railroads are in fact in a better



Warren Buffett: Big investment in rail freight

state than many people may think. This is demonstrated by the fact that the US transports 10 times more freight by rail than the European Union does. Buffet explained that, "They do it in a cost-effective way and extraordinarily environmentally friendly way... I basically believe this country will prosper and you'll have more people moving more goods 10 and 20 and 30 years from now, and the rails should benefit. It's a bet on the country, basically."

The news of the investment is extremely good for the environmental lobby. A single gallon of diesel can power an American freight loco to take a tonne 436 miles. As Burlington Northern transports vastly more freight per emission than road or air hauliers, there is potential for it to trade millions if not billions of dollars of carbon credits in future years.

Burlington Northern also offers vast fuel efficiencies – one train removes 280 freight trucks off US highways – and the coal it transports is largely from low-sulphur coal deposits, which will be increasingly in demand as legislators continue to clamp down on polluters.



ASLEF tells Transport Committee to prioritise Rail Freight

NATIONAL Organiser Simon Weller and EC member Hugh Bradley ensured that the Transport committee were aware of the importance of rail freight investment when they were called to give evidence to their enquiry into "Priorities for Investment in the Railways."

Following ASLEF's written evidence, Simon and Hugh detailed just why it was important to get freight on rail and what needed to be done to ensure the rail freight industry had a bright future. When quizzed on the plans for the strategic freight networks, the National Organiser took no prisoners explaining, "I had a rather blank look when you said a strategic freight network because there is no strategy at the moment to our freight network, in fact the freight network is in danger of just

collapsing." He went on to call for a more strategic approach rather than just FOCs outbidding each other. "We have a lot of open access with guns-for-hire type freight operators and they are just poaching the work off each other. There is no real mechanism for attracting freight onto rail and all they are doing is simply undercutting each other."

When asked if he felt that not enough attention is given to the needs of freight, Simon replied, "I would certainly agree with that. Freight is, I would say, the very poor relative within the rail industry."

Simon and Hugh also called for the construction of a dedicated freight route and spoke out against Network Rail's deferral of maintenance work and the effect it will have on the industry.



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Stobart run first temperature controlled train from Spain

ON Friday 30th October, Stobart and DB Schenker made history by running the first temperature controlled train from Spain. The service is due to run weekly to begin with however, it is hoped to be daily by the end of 2010. The two-day trip from Valencia to Dagenham represents the longest single train trip operating in Europe.

The train which takes fruit and vegetables to UK supermarkets including Tesco, Co-op, Sainsbury's and Asda is continuously monitored to ensure that the stock is kept at the correct temperature.

The train terminated in Dagenham, however it is intended that trains will also serve its base at Widnes, Cheshire for delivery to stores in the north and Scotland.

Stobart explained that each trip would take 30 lorries off of the road between Spain and the UK. In a year, one weekly rail trip will stop 8,600 tonnes of carbon being pumped into the atmosphere.

Welcomed boost for freight link from Felixstowe to Midlands

A NEW stretch of track 0.6 miles long at Ipswich that will link a branch line with a main route and two rail loops around Ely junction in Cambridgeshire has been announced by Network Rail. The £53 million contract for the work has been awarded to Jacobs Engineering.

The work will improve freight services from Felixstowe port to the Midlands, North West, Yorkshire and Scotland. Currently, in order to reach these parts of the country, trains have to travel down the Great Eastern Mainline through London and then up the West Coast Main Line.

The work which is due to be completed by 2014 will create many benefits for the east of England and the added capacity will be much needed with Network Rail estimating that container traffic will quadruple by 2030.

The price tag is small change when considering that congestion on the A14 costs the region an estimated £80 million each year. It's good news for the environment too with an estimated 2,000 lorry journeys coming off the road every day. Andrew Munden, route director for Network Rail explained, "That's about 750,000 journeys a year by 2030, reducing traffic congestion, improving road safety and reducing CO2 emissions by around three-quarters."

Denby uses megatruck to force test case

HAULAGE company Denby are hoping to force a test case on megatrucks after the company sent out a 25 meter long vehicle. The vehicle was stopped after just a 30 meter drive for breaking UK legislation restricting lorries to 16.5 meters.

Denby however claim that the vehicle is not illegal; as it does not breach the 44 tonne legal limit despite the Department for Transport warning the company that taking the truck on to the public highway would be a violation of road legislation.

Dick Denby has claimed that the truck would allow the number of lorries on the motorway to be reduced by a



third. However ASLEF General Secretary Keith Norman has rubbished the view that these vehicles are cleaner and safer. "In simple terms, Denby transport have broken the law and should be dealt with appropriately. To suggest that these vehicles are greener is nonsense. They will simply undermine the genuine green alternative to road haulage, with is putting freight on to

trains. This is not about the environment but cutting costs to undermine rail and make greater profits to the detriment of safety and the environment." Keith added, "If this is allowed, it will be just the start of bigger lorries. It won't be long till we have 60 tonne megatrucks on our roads, something that polls show the public are strongly opposed to."

Freight on Rail campaign will not be derailed



Philippa Edmunds of Freight on Rail updates us on the campaign to keep LHVs off of our roads, the lobbying in Europe and what the future holds ...

UNAUTHORISED TRIAL OF MEGA TRUCKS HALTED IN ITS TRACK AT DEPOT

MEMBERS will have seen the attempt by Denby Transport to drive its 25 metre 44 tonne truck on local roads in Lincolnshire stopped at the depot gates by the police and Vosa on 1st December. Unsurprisingly the mega truck had to be escorted to the closest roundabout to turn around which highlighted the vehicle's lack of manoeuvrability and potential danger in emergency situations.

Freight on Rail and Campaign for Better Transport were prepared for this trial and Stephen Joseph did a BBC TV interview which

was included in the BBC TV news coverage including a video on the home page on 1st December, while I issued a press release highlighting the disadvantages of mega trucks and then did a series of media interviews including a BBC Radio 4 debate with Dick Denby on the PM programme. On balance, I explained "I think, we were able to illustrate the disadvantages of mega trucks and paucity of their arguments but it is going to be a long hard campaign and we need to remain vigilant as these vehicles have powerful allies. The fact that vehicle manufacturers support mega trucks indicates to me that mega trucks would not lead

to less lorries, otherwise would they support their introduction?"

The emerging theme from this episode is that the mega trucks lobby is going to push for the length only at this stage stating that they need this because many products like crisps and tissues cube out before they reach the weight restrictions. The subtext of this is that the length alone will be less controversial initially and the weight increase can be achieved several years down the line. The DGREN research states that it would be difficult to achieve the length in incremental increases whereas the weight would be increased in this way. Also the new German Government coalition, unlike the previous coalition, has sanctioned further trials of mega trucks as long as the weight limit is below 60 tonnes. This means that the threat of a corridor approach between Sweden and the Netherlands to introduce mega trucks will be put back on the European Commission agenda.

STATUS OF EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN - EU TRANSPORT CHAIR OPPOSED MEGA TRUCKS

Brian Simpson, North West Labour MEP and Chair of the European Transport Committee hosted a reception for Freight on Rail on 10 November in Brussels to highlight the benefits of rail freight compared with mega trucks. This is part of the long running Freight on Rail campaign, now in its third year, to show that mega trucks are not the answer to reducing freight's emissions nor reducing road congestion.

Mega trucks, which would be fifty per cent longer and a third heavier than existing HGVs, are still being evaluated by the European Commission. Despite the fact that the UK Government rejected trials of mega trucks in June 2008, there is a danger that mega trucks will come to the UK by default if the EC allows mega trucks in cross border traffic.

So far, Freight on Rail has been able to expose the flawed case for mega trucks by highlighting how the Commission's research relies on simplistic and unsound research which downplays or ignores the environmental social and economic costs of mega trucks, a point emphasised by Stephen Joseph, Executive Director, Campaign for Better Transport/Chair of Freight on Rail at the event. The proponents claim that mega trucks will mean fewer lorries but the reality is that these bigger trucks will end up carrying the same amount of freight further



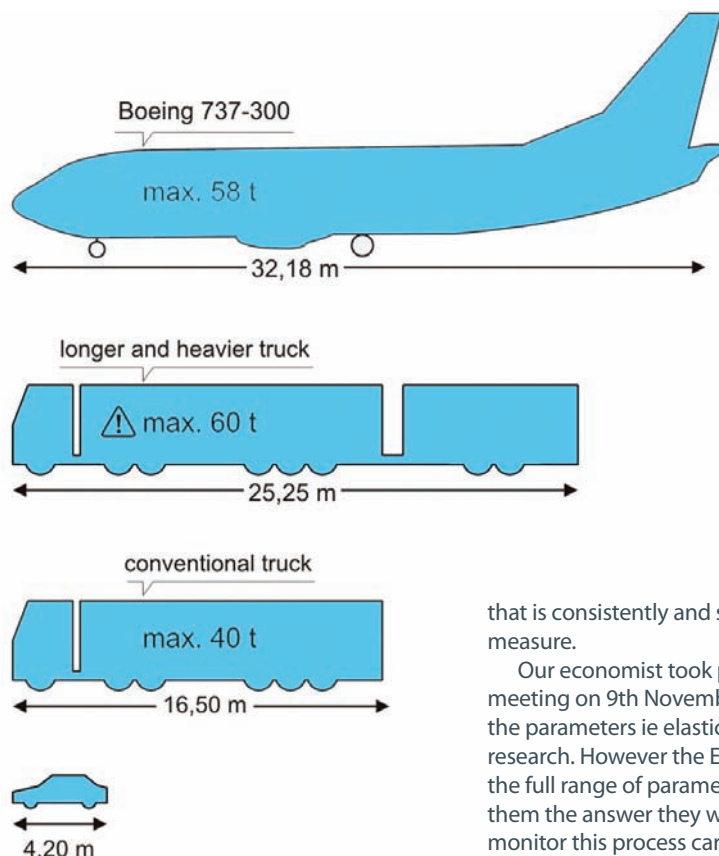
because any cuts in road freight costs will result in more road freight and will take traffic from rail and water with the resulting increase in road congestion, emissions and exposure to accidents. The EC sponsored research is being carefully monitored, by Freight on Rail which exposed two significant mathematical errors in its work distorting the case in favour of mega trucks. A panel of economists, including Freight on Rail's representative, is in the process of agreeing parameters for the next stage in the research.

In the UK, mega trucks would destroy the entire intermodal rail market (ie containers) and 50% of bulk traffic forcing the traffic back onto congested roads. The European Commission's own research admits that mega trucks would have a detrimental effect on rail freight and be more dangerous than existing HGVs. These devastating impacts are not confined to the UK, Kombiverkehr, the largest combined transport operator in Europe, who spoke at our reception, forecasts that 50% of this market of about 18 million TEU per annum, would return to the roads across Europe resulting in 9 million extra long distance lorry journeys averaging 800 kms each. He also stated that a scenario 2 - 25 metres 40 tonnes would be almost as bad as rail would lose 40% of current market. He summed up by saying that mega trucks would also jeopardise forecasted doubling of market share between 2005-2015.

The 80 strong audience, which included 14 MEPs, various researchers and commission officials, was addressed by Antonio Preto, Head of cabinet of Vice President Antonio Tajani, the Transport Commissioner at the time. He said that the Commission is not currently convinced of benefits of mega trucks and stressed that they could hinder the Commission's sustainability aims, a point consistently made by Freight on Rail. However, Siim Kallas of ex Prime Minister of Estonia is now the new Transport Commissioner so views could alter dramatically but at least he is a committed cyclist and president of the cyclists union in Estonia. Freight on Rail will be working with its partners in Europe to lobby the new Commissioner.

The Secretary General of the European Automobile Club, explained about the existing risks HGVs pose, the lack of compliance with existing road regulations and the impact of HGVs on infrastructure. He highlighted that rail freight is safer than long-distance road freight using motorway and A roads, as HGVs are over 3 times more likely to be involved in fatal accidents than cars due to a combination of size, lack of proper enforcement of drivers hours, vehicle overloading and differing foreign operating standards.

Sabine Trier, Deputy General Secretary of European Transport Federation (ETF), stated mega trucks would have a negative employment and negative effects on working conditions in the transport sector as a whole and stated that ETF could see no advantage in introducing mega trucks. She highlighted that the EC study made



the sweeping statement that Mega trucks would lead to a reduction of employment in the road haulage sector – based on the assumption of less total journeys – but that the remaining staff would be better trained and paid without any research to back up this statement.

Our objections to mega trucks are shared by 81% of the French, 75% of the British, 73% Germans and 94% Austrians. An alternative is to support rail freight, the low carbon energy efficient safe alternative rather than undermining it as part of the low carbon economy.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION RESEARCH STATUS

So far this research has been too simplistic, has had two significant mathematical errors which distort the analysis in favour of mega trucks and uses a network model with few freight zones. The EC's own internal consultants admit the model used is not reliable for shorter distances because the resulting increase in vehicle kilometres would not be recorded if a depot closed within Scotland, for example, one zone. Any future research needs to look at specific geographical differentials, different commodity markets, different growth assumptions and a range of parameters, i.e. elasticities. There is a huge risk that mega trucks could create more carbon emissions by simply moving the same amount of freight further afield as well as undermining low carbon alternatives.

If Europe were to give the go-ahead for cross border traffic these mega trucks would go to member states by default over time. Such a move would also fly in the face of public opinion

that is consistently and strongly opposed to the measure.

Our economist took part in a peer group meeting on 9th November in Brussels to agree the parameters ie elasticities for the forthcoming research. However the EC will not want to use the full range of parameters as it will not give them the answer they want so we will have to monitor this process carefully.

In order to make UK MEPs realise that this is a live issue, please could you lobby your own MEPs at

- www.europarl.europa.eu/members/public/geoSearch/zoneList.do?country=GB&language=EN with bullets points on the Freight on Rail website
- No mega trucks page www.freightonrail.org.uk/NoMegaTrucks.htm

NEED TO CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RAIL FREIGHT GRANTS REVENUE GRANT – MODE SHIFT REVENUE SUPPORT

The Budget in England and Wales for revenue grants is confirmed until April 2011. Currently contracts being awarded for 1 year only although they have previously been 3 years and the state aid clearance is for 5 years.

The Scotland Budget is only confirmed until April 2010. This means that no applications can be awarded at present including any cross border flows in the DfT bid round. We understand that this is part of a wider issue with the Scottish budget but it is nonetheless of concern.

As far as capital grants are concerned in England there are budgets going forward until 2013/14 but like everything else these are vulnerable so please add your voice to the campaign by lobbying your local MP for both revenue and capital grants to be protected as part of the low carbon economy. Without revenue grants the rail container flows will revert to road. The capital grants scheme needs revision to cater for the growth in domestic intermodal flows as well as traditional bulk markets.

- Philippa Edmunds www.freightonrail.org.uk

Freightliner Intermodal Report

IT'S out with the old and in with the new at Freightliner Intermodal CC. After some illness problems and seeking medical advice I have decided to stand down after nearly 10yrs as Company Council Secretary. My position as rep for the north of the company will be replaced by Crewe driver Pete Mason. Its all change as far as the CC lay members are concerned as Steve Wilson is to be replaced by Ipswich driver Dave Gloyn. I wish the lads all the best.

I take great pride in the fact that in my years in the CC we have not worsened our terms and conditions, the first company to achieve this. There have also been no redundancies in that time, something that we continued in our recent pay deal where we guaranteed no redundancies even in the current economic crisis which has affected our colleagues in other FOCs. Some said at the time it was not a good deal but that was said by people who knew that their jobs were safe, and looking back I feel that we did the right thing.

At the recent CC meeting management stated that although it was still a struggle in this present climate they felt sure that they could see this recession out. They stated that the train numbers have stayed about the same and so have the amount of boxes carried, but this may be due to the recent poor weather which left us with a back log to clear. On the down side the price the company receives has dropped 17%. It is wrong that when a box is loaded onto one of our trains, the ports charge our company £40 a time whilst lorries are not charged anything leaving road transport with an unfair advantage.

As a result of our recent threat of industrial action, Freightliner have agreed to change their SMD (policy special monitored driver) to CDP (competence development process) which is a much fairer system with the threat of discipline to us after incidents being so much less. I have to say that without the result of the ballot the company would not have moved on from SMD as over the years when it was raised we were told that SMD was fit for purpose. As I come the end of my term as a rep I would like to thank all those who have supported and helped me over the years from General Secretaries, Assistant General Secretaries, National Organisers, EC members, full time officers, fellow CC members, LDCs and drivers I wish you all the best for the future.

Jamie Fallon, Company Council Secretary, Freightliner Intermodal

DRS Council Report

PAY/CONDITIONS

THE current economic recession is the worst any of us on the freight side has known. All around the sector there are drivers who are unsure if their next pay packet will be their last. Business has slowed dramatically more than the norm, with operators becoming more competitive in trying to find more business. On DRS we have been faced with the prospect of around thirty redundancies of traincrew, which may seem small in light of some of our colleagues in the larger FOCs, but would have meant a loss of around 25% of traincrew.

The Union's stance quite rightly was to protect employment for its membership and I believe this was achieved with some financial losses, i.e. loss of bonuses and salary reductions.

Initially this deal was met with a lot of vocal discontent by an element of the membership, however most of them have now seen the reality of how tough decisions have to be made in tough times. The difficulties faced when trying to negotiate with people's livelihoods at risk are multiplied and extremely different from any normal discussions.

The other big problem facing freight drivers is that the well is running dry with regard to transfers into TOCs. Most of the TOCs have all but frozen recruitment, or are in a position to pick and choose who they so desire from the increasing pool of disenchanting freight drivers.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

The council met with Virgin Trains in an attempt to attain some level of travel facilities for our membership. The talks were very constructive, but the ball is now in the court of



DRS as we have taken discussions as far as we can.

CAB ENVIRONMENTS

To date there has not been much progress in cab improvements, and the recent cold weather has shown some cabs up for what they really are. There is no worse feeling than being part way into a journey only to find your cab heater has now become a cab fan and you are working in an environment that is so cold, even the polar bears are approaching their safety reps. One of the 66's that I worked on recently (yes I know its difficult to imagine a company council rep driving) the temperature dropped to such a level that I found out I had qualified for the winter heating allowance.

Tam McKendrick, Company Council Secretary, DRS



Spring 2010



DB Schenker Report

THE past two years the Traincrew Company Council has had to deal with the continuing reduction in work load within DB Schenker UK. This has mainly been due to the current economic down turn which has affected all Freight Operating Companies.

There have been some very difficult decisions taken by both the TCCC and your Executive Committee, the main one being to overturn the decision of Ayr, Margam and Newport not to accept a reduced hour contract. If this decision had not been taken then there would have been for the first time within (EWS) DB Schenker compulsory redundancies for Traincrew.

Ayr, Margam and Newport are now back on a 35 hour contract but these depots are still under review. Thornaby and Tyne yard remain on a reduced contract of 30 hours.

The TCCC would like to place on record the help and assistance they were given by our colleagues in other TOCs and FOCs that

helped in taking many of our surplus Traincrew. I am sure only a Trade Union like ASLEF could have achieved this.

In October of 2009 DBS Management produced a document for the majority of the Energy Depots declaring a surplus. The initial document did not cover the process for the agreed PT & R procedure so was withdrawn. But it was very clear that Energy were in a down turn situation that would last for quite some time. From this meeting it was agreed that members of the TCCC along with Senior Energy Managers would visit all the Traincrew Depots they controlled. This is currently taking place.

It had become apparent that there were also other Traincrew Depots that could be identified as being underutilised so DBS were asked if there were other Business Units that were in trouble then they should all be dealt with at the same time. It was agreed that this would be brought to TCCC when all the facts were known.

The question now is how do we protect

our members within the Rail Freight Industry?

ASLEF has a major role in trying to influence Government in keeping and GROWING Freight on Rail. We have been very successful in the campaigns we have run, with keeping Mega Lorries off the road being one. It is also well documented that Rail Freight is the GREEN option.

Unfortunately taking freight off rail is a very quick process to happen, but putting it back can take years as has happened in past recessions.

DB Schenker UK is making it quite clear they will not continue to run services that don't give a financial return. We cannot allow this to happen and have to place as much pressure on them as possible, we cannot allow our members within the Freight Industry to be lost.

How do we keep our members in the Freight Industry then? ASLEF has to ensure that the TOCs help out by taking our surplus Traincrew by ensuring that all vacancies are declared and as much pressure as possible is put on them to achieve the FOUR day week, but not just in the TOCs but across the FOCs as well. This should create vacancies throughout the industry and retain our members.

The hard part will be convincing drivers to return to the Freight Industry when the work and vacancies return, which we are sure it will.

At some point in the very near future we could have a COMPULSORY redundant member of Traincrew. It is important to remember if the Tory Government get in they will not help this industry and we are sure they will support the TOCs and FOCs in any future industrial disputes that is why we must act as fast as we can now to protect not only our Rail Freight members but all our other members too

We are all ASLEF Train Drivers not just Freight or Passenger Drivers.

Mick Finn, Company Council Secretary, DBS

GB Railfreight Company Council Report

AS some of you will be aware, I decided last summer, that when my term of office was due for re-election, I wouldn't be seeking selection. To this end there is an election currently taken place, as we go to press and the new company councillor should be in place by publication of this issue of the Freight Journal. I would like to take this opportunity, to wish brothers Barry Hare and Roy Haley, the best of luck in the election and may the best man win.

In saying that, the real work will begin after the election, when the "lucky person" gets to tackle FIRSTGBRf management. Time to wish them good luck again methinks! Finally may I take another opportunity? This time to thank you all for your support, throughout my term, both the good and the bad. I won't dwell on any notable failures. Suffice to say I'm sure you'll remind me when next we meet. The good however few were a three year pay deal,



slap bang at the onset of the credit crunch and the ring fencing of rest days. That said, brothers Morrison and Bloomfield, should rightly claim the credit.

Jim Clark, Company Council Secretary (ret'd)

Take part in ASLEF's Open Freight Forums and shape the future



National Organiser **Simon Weller** calls on Freight Drivers to help shape the Union's Freight strategy ...

THERE were plenty of positives to emerge from the Union's National Weekend Forum at the end of November. One of the most significant discussions was on the Union's freight strategy. There was a strong feeling that this needed detailed discussion and possibly updating.

2009 was obviously an extremely difficult year for the Rail Freight industry. The recession has led to the threat of live redundancies on the railways for the first time since the Beeching Axe. Despite this, due to the hard work of the union's officers and company councils, we have managed to prevent any compulsory redundancies

to date. This has often involved making difficult and not always popular decisions. However securing our members' jobs must always be ASLEF's priority.

There is still a huge amount of work to do however. The recession has reduced the amount of freight travelling around Britain. One of the key issues will be insuring that when it returns, it returns to rail. There are also many significant industrial issues to consider within each Freight Operating Company.

The best way for the Union to create a relevant and effective freight strategy is to consult with as many freight drivers as possible. We need as much input from the

membership as possible to ensure that we can progress in a clear and united fashion. Whilst the environment the FOCs operate in is competitive and cut throat, we can ensure that the drivers' environment is fraternal and united.

With this in mind the EC have agreed that we should have two open Freight Forums. These will allow all of our freight members to have their say and shape the direction of ASLEF's agenda on freight going forward. I encourage as many of you who can to attend. The meetings take place in:

● **Doncaster:** Trades and Labour Club
Wednesday 31st March 2010 at 11am.

● **Bristol:** Bristol Marriot Hotel City Centre,
2 Lower Castle Street, BS1 3AD
Wednesday 7th April 2010 at 11am.

If you would like to come please inform Dave Gould at head office by email at dgould@aslef.org.uk or by writing to head office. I look forward to seeing you there.

FLHH Company Council Report

2009 has so far been a very difficult year for all and right now we are embroiled in a difficult situation over draconian style disciplinary matters within FLHH and staving off the economic gloom. FLHH management are still maintaining cost control measures to secure future employment for all.

With 360+ drivers to date, we conducted the recent 2009 pay talks, paying due cognisance to the current economic conditions and believed as a Council we achieved job security for the next 12 months at least. The pay deal 2009/10 was accepted by the Executive Committee following recommendations from the full business council. Details of the decision were sent to every driver individually.

I have been requested to attend and report to three branches and at the same time, staff side meetings are being sought to be keeping everybody fully informed in the process of maintaining full employment.

Discussions on the Mobility Agreement are still outstanding at the time of writing and I believe they are still awaiting the attention of the Executive Committee. The Driver protection scheme is now up and running.



During our recent meetings with FLHH management we have had discussions around

- Rest day/Not on duty principles
- PNB Location and facilities
- 1999 FLHH Driver T's and C's
- MFA's
- Job share/Reduce hours contract
- Reps Release for duties/Courses
- PPE Facilities
- Class 66 and 70 Loco's

● Sickness Clarification (pay 2009)

Details of discussion in future will be placed on ASLEF FLHH section website when it is up and running and until then minutes of meetings are usually held by Local/B C and Health and Safety reps.

Our special thanks go to D Morgan who has served his term on the Business Council and welcome J Beat in his place.

Tony Venson, Company Council Secretary, Freightliner Heavy Haul